

Dist. 40: Republicans face clearer choice

In the Republican District 40 primary race, Shirley Whitehead, owner of a construction company, holds the edge over Nick Tri in experience. When she was married to a one-term legislator, Whitehead was one of his aides, and in the early 1970s she was a member of the Whiteaker School Advisory Board. Nick Tri, a free-lance writer and editor, is a former University political science instructor.

But one lesson Whitehead unfortunately seems to have gleaned from her government experience is how to talk like a politician. Take her stand on abortion, for instance. She says she doesn't think the state should legislate morals. Fine, but does that mean she favors state funding for low-income women who want abortions? Well, she says, since she is against unnecessary government spending, she can't see voting for such funding.

Nick Tri, on the other hand, also says he doesn't think the state should legislate morals. But he adds that he can't support state discrimination against low-income women by not providing them with funds for abortions.

Another position of Whitehead's that bothers us is her call for a two percent across-the-board cut in state spending, with exceptions made for departments in dire need. They would only suffer one-percent cutbacks. This strikes us as a kind of irresponsible sledge hammer approach.

Tri's approach to the budget makes more sense to us. If it makes sense to keep funding the same or even increase funding for a program, Tri would do just that. For instance, to draw better instructors and administrators to the state's system of higher education, he favors increasing administrative and faculty salaries.

On other issues, Tri and Whitehead seem to have similar positions one would expect to hear from Republicans. But, judging from their responses to questions about abortion and budget cutting, Tri is more straightforward and reasonable than Whitehead.

Tri may lack experience, but his approach to the issues demonstrates an intelligence which

indicates to us that, if elected, he'll be able to initially handle a legislative post and go on to improve by learning valuable lessons from his experience.

We endorse Nick Tri for the Republican nomination from District 40.

The Democratic District 40 race is at once the best and the worst of this year's state primary contests.

In terms of qualified candidates, the race is certainly the most promising for voters in this area — a ballot cast for any of several hopefuls would give high chances for intelligent representation in the Legislature.

But the similarity of the liberal, social-service and education supporting candidates, all of whom have varied lobbying or legislative experience, makes a single-best choice frustrating.

Two of the seven, Jack Craig and Larry Perry, already have served terms in the Legislature. Craig, now a Eugene Water and Electric Board member, emphasizes his environmental commitment.

Perry teaches at South Eugene High School and has been a member of the Lane Community College board since 1975. During his two terms at the capital, his support went to bills on education, labor, tax reform and affirmative action. He'd like to see the state back a housing loan bank to offset timber economy problems.

The newcomers to the political arena are new only because they haven't yet won a legislative seat; all have worked in the governmental structure, lobbying, serving on committees or in jobs at the local level.

Both Carl Hosticka and Ted Romoser teach at the college level. Hosticka is a public affairs professor at the University with a committee service background and Romoser, who has worked extensively with the Oregon Education Association, teaches English at Lane Community College.

They each feel that government has moved away from the needs of ordinary citizens and vow to keep in close contact with constituents. They

share interest in conservation, alternative energy and child care programs, but Romoser is probably the more fiscally conservative.

Senior citizen advocate Ruth Shepherd is a former teacher and Eugene School Board member. She is "fiscally cautious," supports alternative energy tax incentives and wants to see legislative reform such as a limit on the number of bills a legislator can introduce during a session.

Don Chalmers and Margie Hendriksen both have legal backgrounds, Hendriksen as a practicing attorney privately and for Lane County, and Chalmers in student advocacy at the University. Each has served on several governmental committees and lobbied in Salem.

Like the other candidates, they oppose nuclear power, supporting alternative sources of energy. They are conscious of the current need for economy in state government. And with their collective opponents, they support higher education, passage of the Equal Rights Amendment and abortion funding by the state.

Although the District 40 field stands close together in basic political approach to the issues that have defined most races this spring, we feel four candidates emerge as those with the most potential.

Larry Perry's record of legislative effort in his two terms gives a good indication of what voters can expect if they return him to Salem. His experience makes him a serious contender.

Hosticka and Romoser both have given serious consideration to what voters most need from a legislator. Analytical approach seems to be Romoser's strongest point, while Hosticka's strengths would probably be more innovative in nature.

But for energy and dedication that would carry all the candidates' goals to the Legislature, we feel Margie Hendriksen has the edge. She has the conviction to urge colleagues to consider legislation she supports, backed by the legal experience that understands the importance of a solid argument.



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If voters approve Ballot Measure 1 Tuesday, it will be a successful end to a long-term, big-money political campaign waged by those who want to extend their love affair with cars and concrete. The measure transfers funding for non-maintenance programs (85 percent of which are state police traffic

patrols) from the user-generated Highway Trust Fund to the income-tax-produced general fund. This proposed transfer would constitute a public subsidy for the trucking firms of this and neighboring states.

Admittedly, Oregon's multi-billion dollar roadways are

crumbling. A major investment is being lost. The cost of petroleum-based paving material is spiraling. But is it fair to raid the general fund — made up of dollars extracted from working people with little to spare — rather than increase fees paid by truckers — who profit from the pounding they give the

road?

In documents presented to the 1979 Legislature, the Department of Transportation estimated that, of the \$2 billion it will need over the next 10 years, 72.8 percent will be spent on repair — not on new construction. That figure becomes significant after a look at who causes the damage that requires fixing. According to the department, 20 percent of the damage done to the highways is the result of weather. The department estimates that 95 percent of the remaining decay results from use by vehicles over 6,000 pounds.

Common sense would say that those who do most of the damage should fund most of the repairs. But, state government is far from common. Trucks provide only about a third of the money spent to on reconstruction.

Against that backdrop, a casual observer might be confused by Ballot Measure 1, the Legislature's answer to the dwindling supply of repair funds. Rather than asking truckers to pay more, the government proposes a plan which would put funding for the state police in competition with adequate human services programs or efforts to improve the University's library. Why this

approach?

Perhaps an explanation can be found in the Secretary of State's office where campaign contributions to lawmakers are catalogued. Consider the Oregon Committee for action — a consortium of contractors, construction firms and maintenance businesses.

The committee spent \$28,829 during the 1978 primary and \$49,620 in the general. Five of the seven members of the House Transportation Committee received contributions — including chairer, Rep. Glen Whallon (D-Milwaukie), \$500; vice-chair, Rep. Denny Jones (R-Ontario), \$250; and Rep. Chick Edwards (R-Salem), \$1,250 — as did three of the five members of the Senate panel — Sen. Stephen Kafoury (D-Portland), \$100; Sen. Lenn Hannon (D-Medford), \$1,750; and Sen. L.B. Day (R-Salem), \$750.

Course, this isn't meant to imply that those with enough bucks always get the laws they want. And, as my friend Lynd says, there's nothing wrong with taking a bribe as long as you don't let it influence you.

Wasson, who just finished the first year of law school, edited the Emerald in 1976-77 and has covered the last three sessions of the Legislature.

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